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Department of State
Operations Center

(GUYANA TASK FORCE)

Situation Report No. 27

Situation in Guyana as of 2100 hours (EST), Dec. 1, 1978

Six more survivors were released by the GOG today and will be returning on Saturday's Pan Am flight to New York. The Embassy anticipates that 36 additional survivors will be released December 2 and has made reservations for them on Sunday's Pan Am flight.

As they have been granted permission to depart by the Guyanese Government, survivors have informed the Embassy that they prefer to leave Guyana on commercial aircraft. Therefore, State has notified DOD, HEW, FBI, the Secret Service and other interested agencies that plans to fly survivors to Charleston by military aircraft have been cancelled. The remaining press contingent in the Charleston area has been informed.

The New York Times today reported that lawyers representing defectors from the Peoples Temple have charged the Department with laxness in acting on warnings of threats to the lives of Jonestown residents. Allegations of improper conduct against a US Foreign Service Officer were renewed in Friday's press briefing. We are providing more facts to the press in an effort to put the story to rest.

US Consular Officers have attached consular seals to the Peoples Temple property in Jonestown. Seals were also attached to 103 crates of goods in Georgetown consigned to the Peoples Temple. Minister Green expressed moderate displeasure over the action but Ambassador Burke reminded the Minister he had unsuccessfully attempted to reach him to inform him of the necessity to take the step.

Discussions are underway both here and in Georgetown in explore ways the USG might recoup some of its

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costs from the property of the Peoples Temple. Representatives of the Task Force, the Legal Advisor's Office and the Department of Justice discussed possibilities for moving against property in the United States; most options have major legal problems. Our legal advisor in Georgetown is also giving this issue high priority. The legal situation with respect to the property in Guyana is complicated by the fact that the Peoples Temple may have been incorporated in Guyana and the ensuing difficulty of demonstrating that any of the property was privately owned by deceased American citizens. The Embassy speculates that the most efficient way to resolve the situation may be a receivership proceeding in which all interested parties, including the USG, can assert claims.

The four Department of Justice technical experts have arrived in Georgetown and have established working relationships with their GOG counterparts. They will not, however, be permitted to interview the survivors or anyone else. The Embassy is considering the possibility of inviting individual survivors to come to the Embassy, possibly with assurances they would not be interviewed by the FBI on their return to the US. Justice has not yet moved on providing a pathologist as requested by the GOG.

Dover reports that 778 bodies have been embalmed and a total of 255 have been positively identified. Of the first 99 positive identifications received by the Department, next of kin in 81 cases have been identified and notified. The process is continuing. No bodies have yet left Dover AFB. The release and shipment of bodies awaits agreement between Delaware state officials, the USG and Guyanese authorities concerning the issuance of death certificates. We are exploring the acceptability of issuing interim, general certificates to be followed later by the official certificates issued by the Government of Guyana.

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AID is studying the use of contingency funds to lease an aircraft to replace the damaged Guyana Airways Otter. We have major problems with funding the purchase of spare parts to repair Guyanese Defense Force helicopters, the highest priority of the GOG.

R.L. Bruce
Guyana Working Group

TMartin
Senior Watch Officer

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